NUMB. XCII.

# The SPECTATOR.

*—— Convivæ prope dissentire videntur,*
*Poscentes vario multum diversa palato;*
*Quid dem? Quid non dem? ——* Hor.

*Friday, June* 15. 1711.

Looking over the late Packets of Letters which have been sent to me, I found the following one.

MR. SPECTATOR,

YOUR Paper is a Part of my Tea-Equipage; and my Servant knows my Humour so well, that calling for my Breakfast this Morning (it being past my usual Hour) she answered, the SPECTATOR was not yet come in; but that the Tea-kettle boiled, and she expected it every Moment. Having thus in Part signified to you the Esteem and Veneration which I have for you, I must put you in Mind of the Catalogue of Books which you have promised to recommend to our Sex: For I have deferred furnishing my Closet with Authors, till I receive your Advice in this Particular; being your daily Disciple and humble Servant,

*LEONORA.*

In answer to my fair Disciple, whom I am very proud of, I must acquaint her and the rest of my Readers, that since I have called out for Help in the Catalogue of a Lady's Library, I have received many Letters upon that Head; some of which I shall give an Account of.

In the first Class I shall take Notice of those which are sent to me from eminent Booksellers, who every one of them mention with Respect the Authors they have printed; and consequently have an Eye to their own Advantage more than to that of the Publick. One tells me, that he thinks it absolutely necessary for Women to have true Notions of Honour and Equity, and that therefore they cannot read a better Book than *Dalton's Country Justice*. Another thinks they cannot be without *The Complete Jockey*. A third observing the Curiosity and Ambition of prying into Secrets, which he tells me is natural to the fair Sex, is of Opinion this Female Inclination, if well directed, might turn very much to their Advantage, and therefore recommends to me *Mr. Mede upon the Revelations*. A fourth lays it down as an unquestioned Truth, that a Lady cannot be thoroughly accomplished who has not read *The Secret Treaties and Negotiations of the Marshal D' Estrades*. Mr. *Jacob Tonson*, Junr. is of Opinion, that *Bayle's Dictionary* might be of very great Use to the Ladies, in order to make them general Scholars. Another, whose Name I have forgotten, thinks it highly proper that every Woman with Child should read *Mr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism*: As another is very importunate with me, to recommend to all my Female Readers, *The finishing Stroke: Being a Vindication of the Patriarchal Scheme*, &c.

In the second Class I shall mention Books which are recommended by Husbands, if I may believe the Writers of them. Whether or no they are real Husbands or personated ones I cannot tell, but the Books they recommend are as follow. *A Paraphrase on the History of Susanna. Rules to keep Lent. The Christians Overthrow prevented. A Dissuasive from the Play-house. The Virtues of Camphire, with Directions to make Camphire Tea. The Pleasures of a Country Life. The Government of the Tongue.* A Letter dated from *Cheapside* desires me that I would advise all young Wives to make themselves Mistresses of *Wingate's Arithmetick*, and concludes with a Postscript, that he hopes I will not forget *The Countess of Kent's Receipts*.

I may reckon the Ladies themselves as a third Class among these my Correspondents and Privy-Counsellors. In a Letter from one of them, I am advised to place *Pharamond* at the Head of my Catalogue, and, if I think proper, to give the second Place to *Cassandra*. *Coquettilla* begs me not to think of nailing Women upon their Knees with Manuals of Devotion, nor of scorching their Faces with

with Books of Housewifery. *Florella* desires to know if there are any Books written against Prudes, and intreats me, if there are, to give them a Place in my Library. Plays of all Sorts have their several Advocates: *All for Love* is mentioned in above fifteen Letters; *Sophonisba, or* Hannibal's *Overthrow*, in a Dozen; the *Innocent Adultry* is likewise highly approved of: Mithridates *King of* Pontus has many Friends; Alexander *the Great* and *Aurenzebe* have the same Number of Voices; but Theodosius, *or the Force of Love*, carries it from all the rest.

I should, in the last Place, mention such Books as have been proposed by Men of Learning, and those who appear competent Judges of this Matter; and must here take Occasion to thank *A. B.* whoever it is that conceals himself under those two Letters, for his Advice upon this Subject: But as I find the Work I have undertaken to be very difficult, I shall defer the executing of it till I am further acquainted with the Thoughts of my judicious Contemporaries, and have Time to examine the several Books they offer to me; being resolved, in an Affair of this Moment, to proceed with the greatest Caution.

In the mean while, as I have taken the Ladies under my particular Care, I shall make it my Business to find out in the best Authors ancient and modern such Passages as may be for their use, and endeavour to accomodate them as well as I can to their Taste; not questioning but the valuable Part of the Sex will easily pardon me, if from Time to Time I laugh at those little Vanities and Follies which appear in the Behaviour of some of them, and which are more proper for Ridicule than a serious Censure. Most Books being calculated for Male Readers, and generally written with an Eye to Men of Learning, makes a Work of this Nature the more necessary; besides, I am the more encouraged, because I flatter my self that I see the Sex daily improving by these my Speculations. My fair Readers are already deeper Scholars than the Beaus: I could name some of them that talk much better than several Gentlemen that make a Figure at *Will*'s; and as I frequently receive Letters from the *fine Ladies* and *pretty Fellows*, I cannot but observe that the former are superior to the others not only in the Sense but in the Spelling. This cannot but have a good Effect upon the female World, and keep them from being charmed by those empty Coxcombs that have hitherto been admired among the Women, tho' laugh'd at among the Men.

I am credibly informed that *Tom Tattle* passes for an impertinent Fellow, that *Will Trippit* begins to be smoaked, and that *Frank Smoothly* himself is within a Month of a Coxcomb, in case I think fit to continue this Paper. For my Part, as it is my Business in some Measure to detect such as would lead astray weak Minds with their false Pretences to Wit and Judgment, Humour and Gallantry, I shall not fail to lend the best Lights I am able to the fair Sex for the Continuation of these their Discoveries.


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